`1. (Amended)   A method of classifying an area rug, the method comprising:

associating a set of attributes with the area rug, the attributes including: size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition;

obtaining an image of the area rug;

inspecting the image; and

determining values for each of the attributes based on the inspection.

7. (Amended)   A method of classifying an area rug, the method comprising:

providing a database comprising a plurality of images of area rugs, wherein each image has an associated set of attributes including: size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition;

obtaining an image of the area rug being classified;

searching the database to find a first set of images similar to the image of the rug being classified;

determining a correlation among the attributes associated with the images in the first set of images;

assigning values to the attributes associated with the area rug being classified responsive to the determined correlation.

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8. (Amended) The method of claim 2 further comprising assigning a code for each possible value of each attribute.

12 13. (Amended) Apparatus for classifying an area rug, the apparatus comprising:

a computer programmed with a database associating an image of a area rug with a predetermined set of attributes that characterize area rugs, wherein each attribute has a value selected from a predetermined list of values, the computer further programmed to:

determine values for each attribute in the predetermined set of attributes by searching the database for images similar to an image of the area rug being classified and determining a correlation among values of the attributes associated with each image in the database; and

associate with the area rug a value for at least one attribute in the predetermined set of attributes responsive to the determined correlation.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the step of determining values for the set of attributes further comprises:

displaying the image of the area rug being classified to a user; and

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accepting from the user an indication of a value for at least one attribute in the predetermined set of attributes.

15 17. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 [14] wherein the images have a resolution high enough to enable a user to zoom in and view the details of a user selected portion of the rug.

20 22. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 13 [12] wherein the predetermined set of attributes includes at least one of: size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition.

21 23. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 13 [12] wherein the predetermined set of attributes includes size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-23 are pending in the application.

Claims 7 and 8 are objected to for containing obvious minor errors.

Claims 1, 2, 6, 8-14, and 19-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6202051, issued to Woolston ("Woolston" hereafter).

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Claims 3-5 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Woolston in view of U.S. Patent No. 6026377, issued to Burke (hereafter "Burke").

Claims 7 and 15 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim.

Summary of Applicants' Response

Applicants have amended claims 7 and 8 to correct obvious typographical errors. Claims 1, 13-14, 17, and 22-23 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject mater of their invention. The amendments to claims 7 and 13 incorporate allowable subject matter as indicated at page 3 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103.

Applicants' Response to Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art does not show each of the limitations of the present claims. Specifically, the claims require a specific attributes to be associated with an area rug. These attributes include size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition, which are defined in the specification. Moreover, each attribute has a predetermined set of values. For example, the attribute

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"category," refers to the setting in which a rug is produced, and includes Nomadic, Village, Workshop, Masterworkshop, or Machined. (see page 15, line 14). These attributes are an important aspect of the present invention in that they provide a standard, and heretofore unknown, method of classifying area rugs. Such a classification system then enable comparisons between different rugs and efficient searches for rugs having a particular attributes.

Woolston does not teach that such attributes are to be associated with an area rug. Indeed, the portion of Woolston cited in the Office Action mentions that items put up for auction may be classified in a number of broad categories including jewelry, rugs, and the like. Clearly, this differs from the limitations of the present claims.

Applicants' Response to
Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Applicant's respectfully submit that Burke fails to correct the deficiencies of Woolston, and, therefore, the combination of the references does not render obvious the present claims.
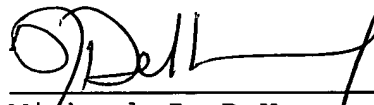
Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 7 and 15 were objected to as depending from rejected base classes. Claim 7 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 1 and 2 from which it depended.

Claim 13 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 15. Claims 7 and 13, as well as claims depending therefrom, are, therefore, in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Changes to the Claims

1. (Amended)   A method of classifying an area rug, the method comprising:

[identifying] associating a set of attributes [that characterize] with the area rug[s], the attributes including [a plurality of the following]: size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition;

[determining possible values for each of the identified attributes;]

obtaining an image of the area rug;

inspecting the image; and

determining values for each of the [set of] attributes based on the inspection[; and

associating with the area rug a set of values for each one of the set of identified attributes].

7. (Amended)   A method of classifying an area rug, the method comprising:

providing a database comprising a plurality of images of area rugs, wherein each image has an associated set of attributes including: size, color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition;

obtaining an image of the area rug being classified;

searching the database to find a first set of images
similar to the image of the rug being classified;

determining a correlation among the attributes
associated with the images in the first set of images; [and]

assigning values to the attributes [to] associated with
the [image] area rug being classified responsive to the
determined correlation.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 2 further
comprising assigning a code for each possible value of each
attribute[s].

13. Apparatus for classifying an area rug, the
apparatus comprising:

a computer programmed with a database associating an
image of a area rug with a predetermined set of attributes
that characterize area rugs, wherein each attribute has a
value selected from a predetermined list of values, the
computer further programmed to:

determine values for each attribute in the
predetermined set of attributes by searching the database
for images similar to an image of the area rug being
classified and determining a correlation among values of the
attributes associated with each image in the database; and

associate with the area rug a [set of] value[s]
for [each] <u>at least one</u> attribute in the predetermined set
of attributes <u>responsive to the determined correlation</u>.

14.   The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the step of
determining values for the set of attributes <u>further</u>
comprises [steps of]:

displaying the image of the area rug being
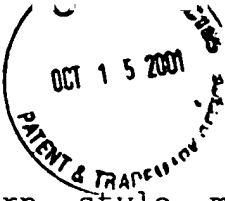classified to a user; and

accepting from the user an indication of [the]
value[s] for [each] <u>at least one</u> attribute in the
predetermined set of attributes.

17. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [17] <u>16</u>
wherein the images have a resolution high enough to enable a
user to zoom in and view the details of a user selected
portion of the rug.

22. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [19] <u>13</u>
wherein the predetermined set of attributes includes at
least one of: size, color, layout, pattern, style, make,
pile, weave, foundation, knot, category, age, and condition.

23. (Amended) The apparatus of claim [19] <u>13</u>
wherein the predetermined set of attributes includes size,

Annex-3

color, layout, pattern, style, make, pile, weave,

foundation, knot, category, age, and condition.

Annex-4